

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 311316Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5172

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION ONE OF TWO VIENTIANE 5337

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MOPS, PFOR

SUBJECT: LAO PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS: SUMMARY
OF PROVISIONS AS OUTLINED BY RLG

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF MY DISCUSSIONS WITH
SOUVANNA AND PHENG ON JULY 31 REGARDING STATUS OF
NEGOTIATIONS:

1. AS REPORTED IN SEPTTEL, BOTH MEN EXPECT THE PROTOCOL
TO BE SIGNED NEXT WEEK. ALL MAJOR ISSUES HAVE BEEN
SETTLED BUT MINOR PROBLEMS REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED AS
NEGOTIATORS DRAFT THE FINAL TEXT.

2. PROTOCOL WILL BE SIGNED BY PHENG PHONGSAVAN AND NGON
SANANIKONE FOR RLG AND PHOUMI VONGVICHIT AND PHOUNE
DLSIPRASEUTH FOR LPF. PRIME MINISTER IS PLEASED THAT NGON
WILL BE ASSOCIATED WITH DOCUMENT BECAUSE IT SHOULD HELP
TO DISARM LAO CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION. TEN TO FOURTEEN
DAYS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PROTOCOL, NEW COALITION
GOVERNMENT WILL BE INVESTED BY KING, WHO WILL COME TO
VIENTIANE FOR THIS SOLEMN CEREMONY. PHENG EXPECTED
THIS CEREMONY TO BE HELD BETWEEN AUGUST 15 AND 20.
SOUVANNA IS NOT HURRYING TO OBTAIN SIGNING OF PROTOCOL
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BUT INSTEAD WANTS TO MINIMIZE THE TIME BETWEEN THE SIGNING

OF PROTOCOL AND ACTUAL INVESTITURE OF NEW GOVERNMENT. TOWARD THAT END I SUGGESTED TO PRIME MINISTER THAT HE OFFER TO USE ROYAL LAO AIR FORCE PLANES TO BRING PATHET LAO SOLDIERS TO VIENTIANE BECAUSE LPF SECURITY DETACHMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE IN PLACE BEFORE LPF MINISTERS WOULD AGREE TO COME TO CAPITAL. SOUVANNA NOTED SUGGESTION IN HIS LITTLE BLACK BOOK AND I GAVE HIM DETAILS ON THE NUMBER OF C-47'S, C-123'S AND H-34 HELICOPTERS PRESENTLY IN RLAF POSSESSION. SOUVANNA SAID HE WOULD PROPOSE THIS MEANS OF TRANSPORT TO PHOUMI ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT THE LPF MINISTERS WOULD COME VIA HANOI RATHER THAN ACCEPTING OFFER OF RLAF TRANSPORTATION.

3. ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT, SOUVANNA SAID THAT LEUAM WOULD REMAIN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER IN CHARGE OF EDUCATION, SISOUK WOULD REMAIN AT DEFENSE, NGON SANANIKONE WOULD MOVE TO FINANCE, PHENG PHONGSAVAN WOULD REMAIN AT INTERIOR AND SISOUMANG SISALEUMSAK WOULD MOVE TO PUBLIC HEALTH (LATTER IS PRESENTLY MINISTER OF

PTT). ALL MEMBERS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PLACED IN NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT, SOUVANNA SAID. THE TWO SIDES HAVE NOT YET AGREED ON THE TWO NEUTRALS WHO WILL HEAD MINISTRIES OF JUSTICE AND PTT. SOUVANNA DID NOT SAY WHO LPF NAMED TO HEAD THE FIVE MINISTRIES ALLOTTED TO THEM (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ECONOMY AND PLANNING INFORMATION,

RELIGION, PUBLIC WORKS), EXCEPT THAT SOUPHANOUVONG WOULD BE NAMED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND ALSO MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

4. THE JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL WOULD BE COMPOSED OF 42 MEMBERS WITH THE LPF HOLDING THE PRESIDENCY AND ONE VICE PRESIDENCY, THE LATTER ALSO BEING SECRETARY GENERAL. THE RLG WOULD HOLD THE OTHER VICE PRESIDENCY. OF THE 42 MEMBERS, LPF AND RLG WILL EACH DESIGNATE 16 AND REMAINING TEN WILL BE NEUTRAL PERSONALITIES. SINCE THE COUNCIL WILL NOT HAVE SUBSTANTIVE POWERS, SOUVANNA DISMISSED IT AS LPF WINDOW DRESSING.

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5. REGARDING PROVISIONS IN THE PROTOCOL OF DIRECT CONCERN TO THE USG, PHENG SAID THAT PHOUMI IS STILL HOLDING OUT FOR PARAGRAPH 24, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE TWO LAO PARTIES TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE USG ON AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO BIND THE WOUNDS OF WAR. PHENG SAID HE CONTINUES TO OPPOSE INCLUSION OF THIS PARAGRAPH WHICH IS ONE OF THE MINOR OBSTACLES DELAYING CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. PHENG WAS DELIGHTED TO REPORT THAT PROTOCOL MAKES NO REFERENCE

BY NAME TO THE UNITED STATES OR THAILAND (OTHER THAN IN ARTICLE 24), WHICH HE CONSIDERED A MINOR RLG ACHIEVEMENT. POW/MIA'S ARE ALSO DISCUSSED IN PROTOCOL. ON THE OTHER HAND, PHOUMI HAS DELETED TWICE IN EARLIER DRAFTS RLG REFERENCES TO THE 1962 AGREEMENT GOVERNING ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT INTO LAOS. I STRESSED WITH BOTH PHENG AND SOUVANNA THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THIS REFERENCE INSERTED IN THE PROTOCOL AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED.

6. THERE WILL BE 24 BOUNDARY DEMARCATION POINTS, TWO OF THEM ON THE LAO/THAI BORDER. PHENG SAID EACH SIDE HAS A LIST OF OTHER SITES WHERE IT WANTS STAKES TO BE EMPLACED AND JOINT LAO MILITARY COMMISSION WILL ADDRESS ITSELF TO THIS SUBJECT AFTER COALITION GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORMED. THERE WILL BE SOME VAGUE LANGUAGE IN THE PROTOCOL ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR CIVILIANS WHICH PHENG CONSIDERED RLG ACHIEVEMENT, AS HE DID THE INCLUSION OF A PARAGRAPH AUTHORIZING FREE MOVEMENT FOR ALL CABINET MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM. THE TWO SIDES REMAIN AT ODDS ON THE PRECISE LANGUAGE REGARDING THE DISMANTLING OF SPECIAL FORCES BASES AND THE DISSOLUTION OF IRREGULAR FORCES. THE LPF WANTS SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE FORMER FOREIGN SUPPORTED IRREGULARS WHILE PHENG IS HOLDING OUT FOR MORE GENERAL LANGUAGE.

7. I DISCUSSED AT LENGTH WITH BOTH MEN THE PROVISIONS IN THE PROTOCOL FOR FOREIGN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL FROM LAOS. ON BASIS THIS DISCUSSION, IT APPEARS THAT RLG POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT, WHICH I REPORTED IN PARAGRAPH 3, VIENTIANE 5168, WILL BE INCORPORATED IN PROTOCOL. THIS CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL IN THREE STEPS AT 20 DAY INTERVALS TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN SIXTY DAYS AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PGNU.
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(AS I INTERPRET LAST PHRASE, THIS MEANS DATE OF INVESTITURE OF COALITION GOVERNMENT, NOT DATE OF SIGNING PROTOCOL.) JOINT LAO MOBILE MILITARY TEAMS, DISPATCHED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT OF TWO PARTIES, WOULD SUPERVISE WITHDRAWAL.

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